

Appl. 10/601,828
Reply to Office Action of February 23, 2006
Amendment Dated May 23, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A die cutting apparatus, comprising:

at least one metal base portion in the form of a plate having a front surface, a back surface
and perimeter sides;

at least one blade attached to and extending outwardly from said front surface of said at least
one metal base portion and exposing at least one cutting edge along an edge of said
at least one blade; ~~and~~

a covering ~~affixed to and~~ disposed at least partially over said back surface of said at least
one metal base portion and at least partially covering said perimeter sides of said at
least one metal base portion; and

a layer of adhesive interposed between said back surface of said at least one metal base
portion and said covering, said layer of adhesive structured for permanently attaching
said back surface of said at least one metal base portion to said covering.

Claims 2-16 (canceled)

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Claim 17 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, wherein said covering is comprised of plastic.

Claim 18 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, wherein said covering increases the overall thickness of the die cutting apparatus for adapting said at least one blade for use with an existing die cutting press.

Claim 19 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, wherein said covering extends substantially over said back surface of said at least one metal base portion and substantially along at least a portion of said perimeter sides said at least one metal base portion.

Claims 20-32 (canceled)

Claim 33 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a release pad attached to said top surface of the at least one metal base portion.

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Claim 34 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 33, wherein said release pad has a thickness approximately equal to a height of said at least one blade above the top surface of the at least one metal base portion.

Claim 35 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 33, wherein said release pad is comprised of at least one of neoprene or foam rubber that is compressible to expose the at least one cutting edge of said at least one blade when the release pad is pressed against a material to be cut.

Claim 36 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, wherein said at least one metal base portion and said at least one blade are separate components that are welded together to form a cutting die.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 1, wherein said at least one metal base portion and said at least one blade are integrally formed to form a cutting die.

Claim 38 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 37, wherein said cutting die is an etched die.

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Claim 39 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 37, wherein said cutting die is a cast die.

Claim 40 (currently amended) A die cutting apparatus, comprising:
a metal plate having a front surface, a back surface and perimeter sides;
at least one metal blade depending outwardly from said front surface of said at least one metal plate, said at least one metal blade having an exposed cutting edge for cutting into a medium in sheet form; ~~and~~
a housing ~~affixed to and~~ disposed over said back surface of said metal plate and at least partially covering said perimeter sides of said metal plate; and
a layer of adhesive interposed between said back surface of said at least one metal base portion and said housing, said layer of adhesive structured for permanently attaching said back surface of said at least one metal base portion to said housing.

Claim 41 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 40, wherein said metal plate and at least one metal blade are integrally formed.

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Claim 42 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 40, wherein said housing is comprised of a softer material than said metal plate to allow penetration of small protrusions in said back surface of said metal plate.

Claim 43 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 40, wherein said housing is comprised of a softer material than said metal plate to substantially uniformly distribute a force being applied to said housing to said back surface of said metal plate.

Claim 44 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 43, wherein said housing is comprised of molded plastic and configured with a recess that substantially matches the perimeter sides of the metal plate.

Claim 45 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 40, wherein said housing increases the overall thickness of the die cutting apparatus to allow the metal plate and at least one metal blade to be used in an existing pressing device.

Claim 46 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 45, wherein said housing is an adapter having a predetermined thickness to adapt said metal plate for use with an existing pressing device.

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Claim 47 (currently amended) A die cutting apparatus, comprising:

at least one metal base portion in the form of a plate having a front surface, a back surface
and perimeter sides and defining at least one channel therein;

at least one blade positioned within said at least one channel and extending outwardly from
said front surface of said at least one metal base portion and exposing at least one
cutting edge along an edge of said at least one blade, said at least one blade bonded
to said at least one metal base portion; ~~and~~

a covering ~~affixed to and~~ disposed over said back surface of said at least one metal base
portion and substantially covering said perimeter sides of said at least one metal base
portion; and

a layer of adhesive interposed between said back surface of said at least one metal base
portion and said covering, said layer of adhesive structured for permanently attaching
said back surface of said at least one metal base portion to said covering.

Claim 48 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 47, wherein said
covering is comprised of plastic.

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Claim 49 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 47, wherein said covering increases the overall thickness of the die cutting apparatus for adapting the at least one metal base portion to be used with an existing die cutting press.

Claim 50 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 47, wherein said covering is attached to said at least one metal base portion with an adhesive.

Claim 51 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 47, further comprising a release pad attached to said top surface of the at least one metal base portion

Claim 52 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 51, wherein said release pad has a thickness approximately equal to a height of said at least one blade above the top surface of the at least one metal base portion.

Claim 53 (previously presented) The die cutting apparatus of claim 51, wherein said release pad is comprised of at least one of neoprene or foam rubber that is compressible to expose the at least one cutting edge of said at least one blade when the release pad is pressed against a material to be cut.